



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

CDC Newsroom

Media Statement from Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, CDC Director and ATSDR Administrator

Media Statement

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Today, Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, officially begins her post as the 19th director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the ninth administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). U.S. President Joe Biden selected Dr. Walensky to lead the agency in December. Dr. Walensky comes to CDC from Massachusetts General Hospital, where she served as Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases from 2017-2020; and Harvard Medical School, where she served as Professor of Medicine from 2012-2020. Additional biographical information is available on the [CDC website](#).

Statement from Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

It is truly a privilege to join the world's premier public health agency. For 75 years, CDC has carried out a mission to protect America's safety, health, and security at home and abroad.

I am proud to join this agency, and I recognize the seriousness of the moment. The toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on America is truly heartbreaking — for the loss of our loved ones and our beloved ways of life. At Massachusetts General Hospital, I saw firsthand the many difficulties this pandemic brings to our frontline workers and first responders, hospitals and public health systems, communities, and loved ones.

Better, healthier days lie ahead. But to get there, COVID-19 testing, surveillance, and vaccination must accelerate rapidly. We must also confront the longstanding public health challenges of social and racial injustice and inequity that have demanded action for far too long. And we must make up for potentially lost ground in areas like suicide, substance use disorder and overdose, chronic diseases, and global health initiatives.

America and the world are counting on CDC's science and leadership. Just as it has since the beginning of the pandemic, CDC will continue to focus on what is known — and what more can be learned — about the virus to guide America. As part of that promise, CDC's Principal Deputy Director Anne Schuchat will begin leading a comprehensive review of all existing guidance related to COVID-19. Wherever needed, this guidance will be updated so that people can make decisions and take action based upon the best available evidence.

I am so proud to join CDC. Our 24/7 mission is truly more critical than ever.

Additional Resources

- A [high-resolution photo](#) is available for download on the CDC website.
- Follow Dr. Walensky on Twitter [@CDCDirector](#).

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[U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES](#) 

CDC works 24/7 protecting America's health, safety and security. Whether disease start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, or from human activity or deliberate attack, CDC responds to America's most pressing health threats. CDC is headquartered in Atlanta and has experts located throughout the United States and the world.